स्वप्नवासवदत्तम्

Swapnavasavadatta
of
Bhasa

Translated into English by

A.C. Woolner & Lakshman Sarup

Bhāsa

The Vision of Vāsavadattā

(Svapna-Vāsavadattam)

translated by

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INTRODUCTION

After eloping with Vāsavadattā the Avanti princess, the Vatsa king, Udayana, began to neglect the affairs of his state. He had, as far as he could tell, made a bitter enemy of Pradyota-Mahāsena, king of Ujjain, by robbing him of his daughter. Some king or general named Āruṇi invaded the Vatsa kingdom.

In these straits the only remedy the Vatsa ministers could see was an alliance with the powerful state of Magadha, and the best way of effecting this was to marry their king to the Princess Padmāvatī, sister of Darśaka, the king of Magadha. The only obstacle was Udayana's devotion to Vāsavadattā.

So the minister, Yaugandharāyaṇa, concocts a plot, with the co-operation of the Queen Vāsavadattā herself. One day, while the king is away on a hunting expedition, the royal pavilion in a frontier village, Lāvāṇaka, is burnt down. A rumour is spread that Vāsavadattā and Yaugandharāyaṇa have both perished in the fire, whereas they have really slipped away to Magadha disguised as pilgrims.

In the first act the queen and minister are on their way, and passing by a forest hermitage, meet the retinue of the Magadhan princess, Padmāvatī. She has been to visit the queen-mother, Mahādevī. The princess, Padmāvatī, is to stay one night at the hermitage, and has it proclaimed that any one there may claim a boon. This is the minister's opportunity to put Vāsavadattā into the security of the Magadhan court. He pretends that she is his sister, and asks the princess to take her as a ward. His request is granted.

Then a student of theology wanders by and tells the story of the fire of Lāvāṇaka and of the king's great grief. When he leaves, it is evening and they all retire to the hermitage. (ACT I.)

In the next act we find Vāsavadattā at Magadha. The Princess Padmāvatī and her ladies are playing at ball in the palace garden. They talk of Udayana, and Vāsavadattā nearly gives herself away. Then a nurse enters and announces

that Padmāvatī is betrothed to Udayana, and that the wedding must take place that very day.

"The more they hasten," says Vāsavadattā to herself, "the deeper the gloom in my heart." (ACT II.)

Vāsavadattā comes alone to the garden, while the preparations for the wedding are going on. But a maid comes with a request from the queen, and Vāsavadattā must needs plait the wedding garland for her husband's second marriage. (ACT III.)

The new queen, Padmāvatī, wanders in the garden with her train, including Vāsavadattā. King Udayana and his Jester come into the same garden. The ladies bide in a bower for Vāsavadattā's sake. The gentlemen sit down at the entrance, and the ladies cannot avoid over-hearing their conversation. The king admits his heart is still bound to Vāsavadattā, and bursts into tears. Padmāvatī goes to comfort him, and he leaves to attend a court reception. (ACT IV.)

In an interlude we learn the young queen, Padmāvatāī, is ill. Then Udayana goes to see her in the "sea-room." He finds the bed untouched, sits down to wait, and, musing on Vāsavadattā, falls asleep. Vāsavadattā, coming in the half-light to tend the young queen, takes Udayana's form to be Pādmavatā's. Resting on the bed, she finds it is her husband talking in his sleep, as he dreams of her. As she slips away, he wakes and catches a glimpse of her. Rushing after her, he runs against the door, and the Jester returning half persuades him it was all a dream. News comes that the other minister, Rumaṇvān, has brought a large army to defeat Āruṇi. (ACT V.)

The scene of the next act is Kośambi. The Vatsa kingdom has been recovered. An interlude tells us that Udayana's grief has been renewed by the recovery of his lute. (It seems he must have dropped it on the banks of the Narmadā.) Then while the king mourns his lost love, messengers arrive from Ujjain to say that all is forgiven. Their majesties of Ujjain from the very flrst had intended Udayana to be their son-in-law, and they sent the painted portraits used as proxies in the wedding ceremony. Padmāvatī notices the resemblance of Vāsavadattā's picture to the "Lady of Avantī" entrusted to her care.

Yaugandharāyaṇa in disguise comes to claim his "sister." All is revealed. The ministers are forgiven for their deceit, and the king decides to visit Ujjain, taking both the queens. (ACT VI.)

The general plot belongs to the old story.

The principal dramatic incident that gives its name to the play is the momentary vision of Vāsavadattā when Udayana wakes from a dream of her. (ACT V.)

The main feature of the play is the delicacy with which the feelings of Vāsavadattā are indicated.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager, *Sūtradhāra*—in Prologue only.
Two guards in the retinue of Princess Padmāvatī.
Yaugandhārayaṇa, Chief Minister of Udayana, king of the Vatsas.
Vāsavadattā, Princess of Ujjain, daughter of King Pradyota-Mahāsena, and the first Queen of Udayana, supposed to have been burnt alive and brought to Magadha in disguise as the Lady of Avantī.
Chamberlain and **Maid,** from Magadha with Princess Padmāvatī.
Padmāvatī, Princess of Magadha, sister of King Darśaka. In the last three acts the second queen of Udayana.
Lady Hermit.
Student of theology.
Nurse to the princess of Magadha.
Second Maid, of the princess Magadha.
Jester (Vasantaka) of King Udayana.
Udayana, king of the Vatsas.
Padminikā and **Madhukarikā,** Maids in attendance on the princess of Magadha.
Chamberlain of the Vatsa king of Kauśāmbī.
Vijayā, Portress, at Kauśāmbī palace.
Raibhya, Chamberlain from the Avantī court at Ujjain.
Vasundharā, nurse of Vāsavadattā from Ujjain.

PROLOGUE

(*At the end of the Opening, enter the* **Stage-manager.**)

Stage-manager.

May the arms of Balārama protect thee, arms as fair as the young moon at its rising, given their full vigour by wine, full of Beauty incarnate, and lovely as Spring. [1]

(*By paronomasia this verse introduces the names of* **Udayana, Vāsavadattā, Padmāvatī,** *and V***asantaka.**)

With these words, my lords and gentlemen, I have to announce to you... But what is that? I thought I heard a noise, just as I was to make my announcement. Well, I must see what it is.

(**Voice** *behind the scene*). Out of the way, there! Away, sirs, out of the way.

Stage-manager. So be it. I understand.

The devoted servitors of the King of Magadha, escorting their princess, are sternly driving aside everybody they meet in the Grove of Penance. [2] (*Exit.*)

END OF PROLOGUE

ACT I

(*Forest road near a hermitage.*)

(*Enter two* **Guards.**)

Guards. Out of the way! Away, sirs, out of the way!

(*Enter* **Yaugandhārayaṇa**, *disguised as a religious mendicant, and* **Vāsavadattā** *in the garb of a lady of Avantī.*)

Yaugandhārayaṇa (*Listening*). What? Even here are people driven aside? For,

> These grave seniors, dwellers in the hermitage, content with woodland fruits and clad in bark, worthy of all respect, are being terrified.
> Who is this insolent fellow, this lack-courtesy, made arrogant by fickle fortune, who by his rough commands is turning a peaceful penance-grove into a village street? [3]

Vāsavadattā. Who is it, sir, that turns us aside?

Yaugandhārayaṇa. One who turns aside his own soul from righteousness.

Vāsavadattā. Nay, sir, that is not what I would say. Am I to be driven aside?

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Even the gods, lady, are rejected unawares.

Vāsavadattā. Ah! sir, fatigue is not so distressing as this humiliation.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. This is something your Highness has enjoyed and then given up. It should not trouble you. For,

> Aforetime thou also didst obtain thy heart's desire; with the victory of thy lord thou wilt once more attain an exalted state. The series of worldly fortunes revolves with the march of time like the spokes in a wheel. [4]

Guards. Out of the way, sirs, out of the way!

(*Enter the* **Chamberlain**.)

Chamberlain. No. Sambhashaka, no, you must not drive these people aside. Look you,

> Bring no reproach on the King. Show no harshness to the inmates of a hermitage. These high-minded men make their home in the forest to escape from the brutalities of a town. [5]

Guards. Very well, sir. (*Exeunt.*)

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Why, he seems to be an enlightened person. (*To* **Vāsavadattā**) Come, child, let us approach him.

Vāsavadattā. As you please, sir.

Yaugandhārayaṇa (*Approaching*). Oh, sir, what is the reason of this hustling?

Chamberlain. Ah! good hermit.

Yaugandhārayaṇa (*Aside*). "Hermit," of course, is an honourable form of address, but as I am not used to it, it does not please me.

Chamberlain. Hearken, good sir. Padmāvatī is here, sister to our great king, named by his parents Darśaka. She has been to visit the queen-mother, Mahādevī, who has made her home in a hermitage, and having taken leave of that noble lady, is on her way to Rājagṛiha. So today she is pleased to stay in this hermitage. Therefore,

> You may fetch from the forest, at your sweet will, holy water, fuel, flowers, and sacred grass. The king's daughter is a friend of piety, she would not wish your pious duties to be hindered. Such is the tradition of her family. [6]

Yaugandhārayaṇa (*Aside*). So this is the Padmāvatī, princess of Magadha, who, the soothsayers Pushpaka, Bhadraka, and others have predicted, is destined to become the consort of my royal master.

> Aversion or respect arise from one's purpose. Because I am so eager to see her wedded to my master, I am inspired with great devotion. [7]

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Hearing that she is a princess, I too feel for her a sisterly affection.

(*Enter* **Padmāvatī** *with her retinue and a maid.*)

Maid. Come this way, please, princess. Here is the hermitage, be pleased to enter.

(*A* **Lady-hermit** *is discovered, seated.*)

Lady-hermit. Princess, you are most welcome.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). This is the princess. Her beauty proclaims indeed her noble birth.

Padmāvatī. Reverend lady, I salute you.

Lady-hermit. Long may you live. Come in, my child, come in. A hermitage is indeed the guest's own home.

Padmāvatī. So it is, your reverence. I feel quite at home, and grateful to you for your kind words.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Her words are as sweet as her looks.

Lady-hermit (*To the maid*). My good girl, has no king as yet sought the hand of your blessed sovereign's sister?

Maid. Yes, there is King Pradyota of Ujjain. He has sent an ambassador on behalf of his son.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). I am glad to hear it. And now she has become one of my own dear people.

Lady-hermit. Such loveliness well deserves this honour. We have heard that both are mighty royal families.

Padmāvatī (*To the* **Chamberlain**). Sir, have you found any hermits that will do us the favour of accepting gifts? Distribute according to their heart's desire and demand, by proclamation, what any man would have.

Chamberlain. As Your Ladyship desires. Hearken, ye saintly men, dwelling in the hermitage, hearken to my words. Her Highness, the Princess of Magadha, is gratified by your cordial welcome, and invites you to accept her gifts that she may gain religious merit.

> Who, then, needs a beggar's bowl? Who requires a robe? Some student whose studies are complete, according to the Rule, what fee would he have to offer his preceptor? The princess, devoted to those who delight in law, requests you as a favour to herself, whatever any one desires let him declare it, what shall be given today and to whom? [8]

Yaugandhārayaṇa (*Aside*). Ah, I see my opportunity (*Aloud.*) Sir, I ask a boon.

Padmāvatī. Happily my visit to this penance-grove is fruitful.

Lady-hermit. Everybody in this hermitage is contented. This must be some stranger.

Chamberlain. Well, sir, what can we do for you?

Yaugandhārayaṇa. This is my sister. Her husband has gone abroad. My wish is that Her Highness would take my sister under her protection for some time. For,

> No need have I of wealth, or of worldly joys, or of fine raiment, nor have I donned the orange robe to gain a livelihood. The

royal maid is wise and knoweth well the path of duty. She can well protect the virtue of my sister. [9]

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). So! the noble Yaugandhārayaṇa is determined to leave me here. Be it so, he will not act without reflection.

Chamberlain. Lady! His expectation is great indeed. How can we consent? For,

Wealth it would be easy to give, or one's life, or the fruit of austerity. Anything else would be easy, but hard is the guarding of a pledge. [10]

Padmāvatī. My Lord, after first making our proclamation—"what would anyone have?"—It is improper to hesitate. Whatever he says, must be done.

Chamberlain. These words are worthy of Your Highness.

Maid. Long live the princess, who keeps her word.

Lady-hermit. Long life to you, blessed lady!

Chamberlain. Very well, my Lady. (*Approaching* **Yaugandhārayaṇa.**) Reverend sir, Her Highness accepts the guardianship of your sister.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. I am much indebted to Her Highness. (*To* **Vāsavadattā.**) My child! Approach Her Highness.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). There is no escape. I will go, unfortunate that I am.

Padmāvatī. Yes, come hither. Now you belong to me.

Lady-hermit. She looks to me like the daughter of the king.

Maid. You are right, reverend mother. I, too, can see that she has known better days.

Yaugandhārayaṇa (*Aside*). Ah! half my task is ended. Things are turning out just as it was arranged with the other ministers. When my royal master is reinstalled and Vāsavadattā is restored to him, Her Highness, the Princess of Magadha, will be my surety for her. For, indeed,

Those who first predicted our troubles, foretold that Padmāvatī was destined to become the consort of my king. On that prophecy I have relied in acting as I did, for fate does not transgress the words of well-tried oracles. [11]

(*Enter a* **Student** *of Theology.*)

Student (*Looking upwards*). It is midday and I am tired out. Where shall I take a rest? (*Turning round*) Good, there must be a penance-grove nearby, because,

The deer are quietly grazing, free from fear, in a place where they feel safe. All the trees, tended with loving care, have their branches loaded with fruit and blossom. There is a great wealth

of tawny kine, but no fields are tilled on any side. Undoubtedly it is a penance-grove, for this smoke arises from many an altar. [12]

I will go in. (*Entering,*) Hallo! This person is out of keeping with a hermitage. (*Looking in another direction.*) But there are also hermits. There is no harm in proceeding further. Oh! ladies!

Chamberlain. Come in, sir, with perfect freedom, sir. A hermitage is indeed common to all.

Vāsavadattā. How now!

Padmāvatī. Oho! this lady shuns the sight of strangers. Very well, I must take good care of my ward.

Chamberlain. Sir, we were here first. Please accept our hospitality to a guest.

Student (*Drinks*). Thank you. Now I am refreshed.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Sir, whence have you come, whither are you going, and where is your abode?

Student. I will tell you, sir. I am from Rājagṛiha. In order to specialize in Vedic studies, I took up my abode in Lāvāṇaka; it's a village in the Vatsa country.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Ah! Lāvāṇaka! At the mention of that name my anguish seems renewed.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. And have you completed your studies?

Student. No, not yet.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. If you have not finished your studies, why have you returned?

Student. A terrible catastrophe has happened there.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. What was that?

Student. There is a king there named Udayana.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. I have heard of His Highness. What about him?

Student. He was passionately enamoured of his queen, Vāsavadattā, a princess of Avantī.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Quite possible. What then?

Student. When the king had gone out hunting the village took fire, and she was burnt alive.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Untrue, untrue, I am living, still, poor wretch!

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Well, go on.

Student. Then in attempting to rescue her a minister named Yaugandhārayaṇa fell into the flames himself.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Did he really? Well, what then?

Student. Then the king came back, and when he heard the news he was distracted with grief at their separation, and wanted to end his life in that very fire. It was all the ministers could do to hold him back.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Yes, I know my lord's tender feelings, for me.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. And then?

Student. The king clasped to his breast the half-burnt ornaments that had adorned her person and fell down unconscious.

All. Alas!

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). And now I hope the noble Yaugandhārayaṇa is satisfied.

Maid. Princess, this noble lady is in tears.

Padmāvatī. She must be very tender-hearted.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Quite so, quite so. My sister is tender-hearted by nature. What happened then?

Student. Then, by degrees, he regained consciousness.

Padmāvatī. Thank goodness, he is alive. The words "fell down unconscious" took my breath away.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Well, proceed.

Student. Then the king suddenly got up, his body stained with dust from rolling on the ground, and burst into lamentation after lamentation. "Oh Vāsavadattā—Princess of Avantī—Alas, my beloved—my darling pupil—oh!" and so on and so on. In short,

> No love birds so lament their loss, nor even those that are bereft of fairy brides. Happy the woman who is thus loved by her lord: consumed by fire, but by reason of her husband's love not consumed by woe. [13]

Yaugandhārayaṇa. But tell me, sir, was none of his ministers at pains to comfort him?

Student. Yes, there was a minister named Rumaṇvān who did his very best to console him.

> Like the king he will touch no food, his face is wasted by ceaseless weeping. Depressed by sorrow like his lord, he neglects the care of his person. Day and night he attends untiring on the king. Should the king suddenly depart this life, he also will expire. [14]

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Happily my lord is in good hands.

Yaugandhārayaṇa (*Aside*). What a heavy responsibility Rumaṇvān has to bear! For,

> My burden has been lightened, his toil is constant. Everything depends on him, on whom the king himself depends. [15]

(*Aloud.*) Well, sir, by this time is the king consoled?

Student. That I do not know. The ministers left the village, taking with them—after great difficulty—the king, who was pouring out a piteous tale. "Here it was that I laughed with her, here I talked with her, here I sat with her, here we fell out, and here I passed the night with her," and so forth. With the departure of the king the village became desolate like the sky when the moon and the stars have set. Then I, too, came away.

Lady-hermit. He must indeed be a noble king who is praised like this even by a stranger.

Maid. What think you, princess, will he offer his hand to another woman?

Padmāvatī (*Aside*). My heart was asking that very question.

Student. Let me take leave of you. I must be going.

Both. Go, and fare you well.

Student. Thank you. (*Exit.*)

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Good. I too wish to go if Her Highness permits.

Chamberlain. The holy hermit wishes to depart with Your Highness's permission.

Padmāvatī. This gentleman's sister will feel lonely in his absence.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. She is in good hands, she will not repine. (*To the Chamberlain.*) Pray, let me go.

Chamberlain. Very well, we shall meet again.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. I hope so. (*Exit.*)

Chamberlain. It is time now to go within.

Padmāvatī. Reverend lady, I salute you.

Lady-hermit. My child, may you get a husband as good as yourself.

Vāsavadattā. Reverend lady, I too salute you.

Lady-hermit. And you also, may you soon find your husband.

Vāsavadattā. I thank you.

Chamberlain. Come, please, this way. This way, my Lady. For now,

> The birds have returned to their nests. The hermits have plunged into the stream. Fires have been lit and are burning brightly, smoke is spreading in the penance-grove. The sun has dropped a long way down, gathering his rays together he turns his chariot and slowly descends on the summit of the western mountain. [16]

(*Exeunt omnes.*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT

ACT II

INTERLUDE

(*Palace garden at Magadha.*)
(*Enter a* **Maid.**)

Maid. Kunjarikā, Kunjarikā! Where, O where is the Princess Padmāvatī? What do you say? "The princess is playing at ball near the jasmine bower." Very good, I shall go to her. (*Turning and looking around.*) Ah! here comes the princess playing with a ball. The jewels in her ears are turned upwards; the exertion has spangled her brow with tiny drops of perspiration, so that fatigue lends a charm to her face. I will go and meet her. (*Exit.*)

END OF THE INTERLUDE

(*Enter* **Padmāvatī,** *playing with a ball, accompanied by her retinue and* **Vāsavadattā**.)

Vāsavadattā. Here is your ball, my dear.

Padmāvatī. Dear lady! Now that is enough.

Vāsavadattā. You have played over long with your ball, my dear. Your hands are quite red, they might belong to someone else.

Maid. Play on, princess, play on. Enjoy these charming days of girlhood while you may.

Padmāvatī. What's in your thoughts, dear lady? I think you are laughing at me.

Vāsavadattā. No, no, my dear. You are looking more beautiful than ever today. I am getting a full view as it were of your pretty face.

Padmāvatī. Away with you! Don't you make fun of me.

Vāsavadattā. Well, I am mute—O daughter-in-law elect of Mahāsena!

Padmāvatī. Who, pray, is this Mahāsena?

Vāsavadattā. There is a king of Ujjain, named Pradyota, who is called Mahāsena on account of the vast size of his army.

Maid. It is not with that king the princess wishes to be related.

Vāsavadattā. Whom does she want, then?

Maid. There is a king of the Vatsas named Udayana. It is of his virtues that the princess is enamoured.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). She wants my noble lord as her husband. (*Aloud.*) For what reason?

Maid. He is so tender-hearted—that's why.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). I know, I know. I, too, fell in love with him like that.

Maid. But, princess, suppose the king is ugly.

Vāsavadattā. No, no. He is very handsome.

Padmāvatī. How do you know that, dear lady?

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Partiality to my lord has made me transgress the bounds of propriety. What shall I do now? Yes, I see—(*Aloud.*) That is what everybody says in Ujjain, my dear.

Padmāvatī. Quite so. He is not, of course, inaccessible to the people of Ujjain, and beauty fascinates the hearts of all.

(*Enter a* **Nurse**.)

Nurse. Victory to the princess! Princess, you are betrothed.

Vāsavadattā. To whom, good lady?

Nurse. To Udayana, the king of the Vatsas.

Vāsavadattā. Is he in good health, that king?

Nurse. He arrived here quite well, and the princess is betrothed to him.

Vāsavadattā. Alack-a-day!

Nurse. Alack-a-day! Why, what's the matter?

Vāsavadattā. Oh, nothing. His grief was so great, and now he is indifferent.

Nurse. Madam, the hearts of great men are ruled by the Sacred Scriptures, and are therefore easy to console.

Vāsavadattā. Good lady, tell me, did he choose her himself?

Nurse. Oh, no. He came here on some other business; when our king observed his nobility, wisdom, youth, and beauty, he offered her hand of his own accord.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Just so. Thus my lord is without reproach.

(*Enter another* **Maid**.)

Second Maid. Make haste, madam. Our queen declares that the conjunction of the stars is auspicious today, and the nuptial celebrations must take place this very day.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). The more they hasten, the deeper the gloom in my heart.

Nurse. Come. Your Highness, come.

(*Exeunt omnes.*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT

ACT III

(*Palace Garden*)

(*Enter* **Vāsavadattā**, *deep in thought.*)

Vāsavadattā. I have left Padmāvatī in the ladies' court, with its festive wedding crowd of women and have come here alone to this pleasure garden. Here I can give vent to the sorrow which fate has laid upon me. (*Walking about.*) Alas! I am undone. Even my noble lord now belongs to another woman. Let me sit down. (*Sits down.*) Blessed indeed is the Love-Bird. Parted from her mate she ceases to live. But I cannot escape from life. Miserable that I am, I live on in the hope of seeing him again.

(*Enter a* **Maid** *carrying flowers.*)

Maid. Where has the noble lady of Avantī gone? (*Turning and looking around.*) Ah, there she is, sitting on a stone bench under the *priyaṅgu* creeper. There she sits, wearing a graceful garment unadorned, her mind intent on distant thought, looking like a digit of the moon obscured by mist. I will go up to her. (*Approaching.*) Noble lady of Avantī, I have been seeking you for ever so long.

Vāsavadattā. For what?

Maid. What our queen says is this: "The lady comes from a noble family, she is kind and skilful. So let her plait this wedding garland."

Vāsavadattā. And for whom is it made?

Maid. For our princess.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Must I do even this? The Gods are indeed cruel.

Maid. Madam, there is no time now to think of other things. The bridegroom is taking his bath in the inlaid room, so please plait the garland quickly.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside.*) I can think of nothing else. (*Aloud.*) My good girl, have you seen the bridegroom?

Maid. Yes, I have seen him. That was through affection for the princess and my own curiosity.

Vāsavadattā. What is he like?

Maid. Oh, madam, I tell you I never saw anyone like him.

Vāsavadattā. Well, tell me, tell me, my dear, is he handsome?

Maid. One might say the God of Love himself, without the bow and arrows.

Vāsavadattā. Thanks, that will do.

Maid. Why do you stop me?

Vāsavadattā. It is improper to listen to anyone singing the praises of another woman's husband.

Maid. Then please finish the garland as quickly as you can.

Vāsavadattā. I shall do it at once. Give me the flowers.

Maid. Here they are. Please take them.

Vāsavadattā (*Turns out the basket and examines the flowers*). What is the name of this plant?

Maid. It is called "Lords and Ladies."

Vāsavadattā (*Aside.*) I must work in lots of this for myself and Padmāvatī. (*Aloud.*) What do you call this flower?

Maid. Oh, this is "Old Wife's Bane."

Vāsavadattā. We needn't use that one.

Maid. Why not?

Vāsavadattā. His wife is dead, so it wouldn't be any use.

(*Enter another* **Maid**.)

Second Maid. Please make haste, madam. The ladies of living lords are conducting the bridegroom to the ladies' court.

Vāsavadattā. There, it's ready, I tell you. Take it.

First Maid. How beautiful! Madam, I must be off.

(*Exeunt the two* **Maids.**)

Vāsavadattā. She is gone. Alas! All is over. My noble lord is now another's. Heaven help me! I'll to bed; it may soothe my pain, if I can sleep. (*Exit.*)

END OF THE THIRD ACT

ACT IV

INTERLUDE

(*Palace at Magadha*)
(*Enter the* **Jester**.)

Jester (*joyfully*). Ha, ha! How good to see the delightful time of the auspicious and welcome marriage of His Highness the king of the Vatsas. Who could have known that after being hurled into such a whirlpool of misfortune, we should rise again to the surface. Now we live in palaces, we bathe in the tanks of the inner court, we eat dainty and delicious dishes of sweetmeats—in short, I feel myself to be in Paradise, except that there are no nymphs to keep me company. But there is one great drawback. I do not digest my food well at all. Even on the daintiest couches I cannot sleep, for I seem to see the Wind and Blood disease circling round. Bah! there is no happiness in life, if you are full of ailments, or without a good breakfast.

(*Enter a* **Maid.**)

Maid. Wherever has the worthy Vasantaka got to? (*Turning and looking around.*) Why, here he is! (*Going up to him.*) Oh, Master Vasantaka, what a search I have had looking for you!

Jester (*With a leer*). And why are you searching for me, my dear?

Maid. Our queen says, "hasn't the bridegroom finished his bath?"

Jester. Why does she want to know?

Maid. So that I may bring him a garland and unguents, of course.

Jester. His Highness has bathed. You may bring everything except food.

Maid. Why do you bar food?

Jester. Unfortunate that I am, like the rolling of cuckoo's eyes... my stomach is like that.

Maid. May you ever be as you are!

Jester. Off with you! I will go and attend on his Highness.

(*Exeunt ambo.*)

END OF THE INTERLUDE

(*Palace Garden*)

(*Enter* **Padmāvatī** *with her retinue and* **Vāsavadattā** *dressed as a lady of Avantī.*)

Maid. What has brought your ladyship to this pleasure-garden?

Padmāvatī. My dear, I want to see if the *seoli* clusters have flowered or not.

Maid. Yes, princess, they have, with blossoms like pendants; of pearls interset with coral.

Padmāvatī. If that is so, my dear, why do you delay?

Maid. Won't your ladyship sit on this stone bench for a moment while I gather some flowers?

Padmāvatī. Shall we sit here, dear lady?

Vāsavadattā. Let us do so.

(*Both sit down.*)

Maid. (*After gathering some flowers*). Oh, look princess, look! My hands are full of the *seoli* blossoms, with their half-way hose of *realgar.*

Padmāvatī (*Looking at the flowers*). See, lady, how brilliant are the colours of these flowers!

Vāsavadattā. Yes, how beautiful they are.

Maid. Princess, shall I pick any more?

Padmāvatī. No, no, my dear, no more.

Vāsavadattā. Why do you stop her, my dear?

Padmāvatī. If my noble lord should come here and see this abundance of blossom, I should be so honoured.

Vāsavadattā. Why, my dear, are you so much in love with your husband?

Padmāvatī. I don't know, lady, but when he is away from me I feel wretched.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). How difficult it is for me. Even she speaks in this strain.

Maid. How delicately the princess has told us that she loves her husband.

Padmāvatī. I have just one doubt.

Vāsavadattā. And what is that?

Padmāvatī. Was my noble lord as much to Vāsavadattā as he is to me?

Vāsavadattā. Nay, more.

Padmāvatī. How do you know?

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Ah! Partiality to my noble lord has made me transgress the bounds of propriety. I know what I will say. (*Aloud.*) Had her love been less, she would not have forsaken her own people.

Padmāvatī. Possibly not.

Maid. Princess, you might gently suggest to your husband, that you too would like to learn to play the lute.

Padmāvatī. I did speak to him about it.

Vāsavadattā. And what did he say?

Padmāvatī. He said nothing. He heaved a deep sigh, and became silent.

Vāsavadattā. What did that mean, do you think?

Padmāvatī. I think the memory of the noble Vāsavadattā's virtues came over him, but out of courtesy he restrained his tears in my presence.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). How happy I should be if that were true!

(*Enter the* **King** *and the* **Jester**.)

Jester. Aha! how pretty the garden looks with a thin sprinkling of *bandhujīva* flowers, fallen while they were being gathered. This way, my lord.

King. Very well, my dear Vasantaka, here I come.

> Once in Ujjain, when the unimpeded vision of Avantī's princess brought me to that condition that you know of, the God of Love let fly at me with all his five arrows. Of those I still bear the pain in my heart, and now I am wounded again. If Cupid has only five arrows, what is this sixth dart he has discharged at me? [1]

Jester. Where has Lady Padmāvatī gone? Has she gone to the creeper-bower? Or perhaps to the stone seat called the "Crest of the Hill," which is so strewn with *asana* flowers that it looks as if it were covered with a tiger's skin. Or could she have entered the wood of the Seven-leaved Trees with their powerful pungent scent? Or perhaps she has gone into the wooden pavilion with crowds of birds and beasts painted on the walls. (*Looking up.*) Oh, look, your Highness! Do you see this line of cranes advancing steadily along the clear autumn sky, as beautiful as the long white arms of the adored Baladeva?

King. Yes, comrade, I see it.

> Now stretched in an even line, now wide apart; now soaring high, now sinking low, crooked in its twists and turns, as the constellation of the Seven Rishis. Bright as a serpent's belly just

slipped from its slough, like a boundary line it cuts the sky in two. [2]

Maid. Look, princess, look at this flock of cranes advancing steadily in line, as delicately tinted as a garland of pink water-lilies. Oh! the King!

Padmāvatī. Ah! 'tis my noble lord. Lady, for your sake I shall avoid seeing my husband. So let us go into this bower of *madhāvī* creepers.

Vāsavadattā. Very well.

(*They do so.*)

Jester. Lady Padmāvatī came here and went away again.

King. How do you know that?

Jester. Just look at these *seoli* clusters from which the flowers have been picked.

King. Oh, Vasantaka! What a gorgeous flower it is!

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). That name "Vasantaka" makes me feel as if I were at Ujjain again.

King. Let us sit down, Vasantaka, on this stone seat and wait for Padmāvatī.

Jester. Very well, sir. (*Sits down and gets up again.*) The heat of the scorching autumn sun is unbearable. So let us go into this bower of *mādhavī* creepers.

King. All right. Lead the way.

Jester. Very well.

(*Both walk round.*)

Padmāvatī. The worthy Vasantaka is bent on spoiling everything. What shall we do now?

Maid. Princess, shall I keep His Highness away by shaking this hanging creeper swarming with black bees?

Padmāvatī. Yes, do. (*Maid does so.*)

Jester. Help! help! Keep away, Your Highness, keep away!

King. What is the matter?

Jester. I am being stung by these damnable bees.

King. No, no, do not do that. One should never frighten the bees. Look,

Drowsy with drafts of honey, the bees are humming softly in the close embraces of their love-sick queens. Should our footsteps startle them, like us, they will part from their darlings. [3]

So let us stay here.

Jester. Very well.

(*Both sit down.*)

Maid. Princess, we are in truth made prisoners.

Padmāvatī. Happily it is my noble lord who sits there.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). I am glad to see my noble lord looking so well.

Maid. Princess, the lady's eyes are filled with tears.

Vāsavadattā. The *moriṅga* pollen has got into my eyes because of the naughty bees and made them water.

Padmāvatī. Quite so.

Jester. Well, now, there is nobody in this pleasure-garden. There is something I want ask. May I ask a question?

King. Yes, if you like.

Jester. Which do you love best, the lady Vāsavadattā that was, or Padmāvatī of today?

King. Now why do you put me in such a difficult position?

Padmāvatī. Oh, my dear; What a difficult position for my noble lord!

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). And for me, too, unfortunate that I am.

Jester. Now, you must speak, frankly. One is dead, the other is nowhere near.

King. No, my dear fellow, no, I am not going to say anything. You are a chatterer.

Padmāvatī. By so much he has said enough.

Jester. Oh, I swear truly, I won't tell a soul. My lips are sealed.

King. No, my friend, I dare not speak.

Padmāvatī. How stupidly indiscreet be is. Even after that he cannot read his heart.

Jester. What, you won't tell me? If you don't, you shall not stir a single step from the stone seat. Your Highness is now my prisoner

King. What, by force?

Jester. Yes, by force.

King. We shall see.

Jester. Forgive me, Your Highness. I conjure you in the name of our friendship to tell me the truth.

King. No escape. Well listen,

Padmāvatī I much admire for her beauty, charm, and virtue, and
yet she has not won my heart still bound to Vāsavadattā. [4]

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). So may it ever be. This is my reward for all my suffering. My living here unknown is beginning to be delightful.

Maid. Oh, princess, His Highness is very discourteous.

Padmāvatī. My dear, don't say that. My noble lord is courteous indeed, for even now he remembers the virtues of the noble Vāsavadattā.

Vāsavadattā. My dear child, your words are worthy of your birth.

King. Well, I have spoken. Now you must tell me, which is your favourite: Vāsavadattā that was, or Padmāvatī of today?

Padmāvatī. My noble lord is mimicking Vasantaka.

Jester. What is the use of my chatter! I have the greatest admiration for both their ladyships.

King. Idiot. You made me tell, and now, you are afraid to speak.

Jester. What, would you force me.

King. Why, yes, of course.

Jester. Then you will never hear it.

King. Forgive me, mighty brahman, speak of your own free will.

Jester. Now you shall hear. Lady Vāsavadattā I greatly admired. Lady Padmāvatī is young, beautiful, gentle, free from pride, gently spoken, and very courteous. But there is one other great virtue. Vāsavadattā used to come to me with delicious dishes, saying, "Where has the good Vasantaka got to?"

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Bravo, Vasantaka. You must remember this.

King. Very well, Vasantaka. I shall tell all this to Queen Vāsavadattā.

Jester. Alas, Vāsavadattā! Where is Vāsavadattā? She is dead long ago.

King (*Sadly*). It is true, Vāsavadattā is no more.

By your raillery you confused my mind, and by force of former
usage those words slipped out. [5]

Padmāvatī. This was a delightful conversation, but now the wretch has spoiled it all.

Vāsavadattā (*Aside*). Well, well, I am consoled. How sweet it is to hear these words without being seen.

Jester. Be of good cheer, Your Highness. Fate cannot be gainsaid. It is so, and that's all there is about it.

King. My dear fellow, you do not understand my condition, For,

A deeply-rooted passion it is hard to abandon; by constant
recollection the pain is renewed. This is the way of the world
that the mind must cancel its debt with tears to gain tranquillity.
[6]

Jester. His Highness's face is wet with tears. I will get some water to wash it.

Padmāvatī. Madam, my lord's face is hidden in a veil of tears. Let us slip away.

Vāsavadattā. Yes, let us go. Nay, you stay here. It is not right for you to go and leave your husband unhappy. I will go alone.

Maid. The lady is right. You should go to him, Princess.

Padmāvatī. What do you say? Shall I go?

Vāsavadattā. Yes, dear, do. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter the* **Jester**.)

Jester Why, here is Lady Padmāvatī.

Padmāvatī. What is it, my good Vasantaka?

Jester. This is that, that is this.

Padmāvatī. Speak out, sir, speak.

Jester. Lady, the pollen of the *moringa* flowers, carried by the wind, has got into His Highness's eyes, and his face is wet with tears. Please take him this water to wash his face.

Padmāvatī (*Aside*). Oho! like master, like man, how courteous he is. (*Approaching the king.*) Greeting, my lord. Here is some water for your face.

King. Eh, what, Padmāvatī? (*Aside to Jester.*) What's this, Vasantaka?

Jester. It's like this. (*Whispers in his ear.*)

King. Bravo, Vasantaka, bravo. (*Sipping water.*) Padmāvatī, pray be seated.

Padmāvatī. As my lord commands. (*Sits down.*)

King. Padmāvatī,

> The motes of the *moriṅga* blossoms, agitated by the breeze, fair
> lady, have bathed my face in tears. [7]

(*Aside.*)

> She's but a girl and newly wed; should she learn the truth it
> would distress her. Courage she has, it is true, but women are by
> nature easily alarmed. [8]

Jester. This afternoon His Majesty the King of Magadha will, as usual, receive his friends, giving yourself the place of honour. Courtesy reciprocating courtesy engenders affection. So it is time for Your Highness to make a move.

King. Yes, indeed. It is a good suggestion. (*Rises.*)

> Men of eminent virtues are easily found in this world, as those
> whose hospitable treatment is unfailing, but it is difficult to find
> men who duly appreciate these qualities. [9]

(*Exeunt omnes.*)

END OF THE FOURTH ACT

ACT V

(*At Magadha.*)

INTERLUDE

(*Enter* **Padminikā**.)

Padminikā. Madhukarikā, oh, Madhukarikā, come. here quick.

(*Enter* **Madhurikā**.)

Madhukarikā. Here I am, my dear, what do you want me to do?

Padminikā. Don't you know, my dear, that Princess Padmāvatī is ill with a bad headache?

Madhukarikā. Alas!

Padminikā. Run quick, my dear, and call Madam Avantikā. Only tell her the princess has a headache and she will come of her own accord.

Madhukarikā. But my dear, what good can she do?

Padminikā. Why, she will tell the princess pleasant stories and drive, away the pain.

Madhukarikā. Very likely. Where have you made up the princess's bed?

Padminikā. It is spread in the sea-room. Now you go. I shall look for the good Vasantaka, to inform His Highness.

Madhukarikā. Very well. (*Exit.*)

Padminikā. Now I will look for the good Vasantaka.

(*Enter the* **Jester**.)

Jester. The heart of the illustrious king of the Vatsas was depressed by separation from his queen, but now on this auspicious and extremely joyful occasion, fanned as it were by this marriage with Padmāvatī, it burns the more fiercely with the flame of the fire of love. (*Observing* **Padminikā**.) Hallo! Here's Padminikā. Well, Padminikā, what's the news?

Padminikā. My good Vasantaka; don't you know that Princess Padmāvatī has a bad headache?

Jester. Truly, lady, I did not know.

Padminikā. Well, let, His Highness know about it. Meanwhile I will hurry up with the ointment for her forehead.

Jester. Where has Padmāvatī's bed been made up?

Padminikā. It is spread in the "sea-room."

Jester. Well, you had better be off. I will tell his Highness.

(*Exeunt ambo.*)

END OF THE INTERLUDE

(*Enter the* **King.**)

King.

> Once again, with the lapse of time, I have taken up the burden of wedlock, but my thoughts fly back to Avantī's daughter, worthy daughter of a worthy sire; to her, whose slender frame was consumed by the fire at Lavanaka, like a lotus-plant blasted by the frost. [1]

(*Enter the* **Jester**.)

Jester. Quick, Your Highness, quick.

King. What is the matter?

Jester. Lady Padmāvatī has a bad headache.

King. Who told you?

Jester. Padminikā told me.

King. Alas!

> Now that I have won another bride, endowed with grace and beauty, and possessed of all the virtues, my grief is somewhat dulled, yet after my experience of woe, still sick with the former pain, I anticipate the like for Padmāvatī. [2]

Where is Padmāvatī?

Jester. They put her bed in the sea-room.

King. Then show me the way.

Jester. Come this way, your Highness. (*Both walk round.*) This is the sea-room. Be pleased to enter.

King. You go in first.

Jester. Very well, sir. (*Enters.*) Help, help. Back, Your Highness, stand back!

King. What is the matter

Jester. Here's a snake wriggling on the floor. Its body is visible in the light of the lamp.

King. (*Entering, has a look round, and smiles*). Ha! the idiot thinks he sees a snake,

> For the dangling garland dropped from the portal arch, and lying stretched along the ground, thou dost suppose, poor fool, to be a serpent. Turned over by the light evening breeze it does move somewhat like a snake. [3]

Jester (*Looking closely*). Your Highness is right. It is not snake. (*Entering and looking round*). Lady Padmāvatī must have been here and gone away.

King. She cannot have come, comrade.

Jester. How do you know that?

King. What need of knowing? Look,

> The bed has not been pressed, it is as smooth as when made. There is not a crinkle in the counterpane, the pillow is not rumpled nor stained with medicines for an aching head. There is no decoration to divert the patient's gaze. Those who are brought to bed by illness are not likely to leave it so soon. [4]

Jester. Then you might sit down on the bed for a while and wait for Her Ladyship.

King. Very well. (*Sits down.*) I feel dreadfully sleepy, old fellow. Tell me a story.

Jester. I will tell you a story, but Your Highness must say "Oh!" or something to show you are listening

King. Very well.

Jester. There is a town called Ujjain. There there are most delightful swimming baths.

King. What, Ujjain did you say?

Jester. If you do not like this story, I will tell you another.

King. Comrade, it is not that I do not like it. But,

> I remember the daughter of Avantī's king. At the moment of leaving she thought of her kinsfolk, and through affection a tear welled up, which, after clinging to the comer of her eye, fell on my breast. [5]

Moreover,

> Time and again during her lessons she would fix her gaze on me and, dropping her quill, her hand would go on playing in the air. [6]

Jester. All right. I will tell you another. There is a town called Brahmadatta where there was once a king named Kampilya.

King. What's that? What did you say?

(**Jester** *repeats what he has just said.*)

King. Idiot! You should say King Brahmadatta and Kampilya City.

Jester. Is Brahmadatta the king and Kampilya the city?

King. Yes, that's right.

Jester. Well, then, just wait a moment, while I get it pat. "King Brahmadatta, Kampilya City." (*Repeats this several times.*) Now listen.—Why, His Highness is fast asleep. It is very chilly at this hour. I will go and fetch my cloak. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* **Vāsavadattā** *in Avantī dress and a* **Maid.**)

Maid. Come this way, lady. The princess is suffering from a severe headache.

Vāsavadattā. I am so sorry. Where has her bed been made up?

Maid. It is spread in the sea-room.

Vāsavadattā. Well, you lead the way.

(*Both walk round.*)

Maid. This is the sea-room. Go in, madam. I will hurry up the ointments for her forehead. (*Exit.*)

Vāsavadattā. Oh, how cruel are the gods to me. Padmāvatī, who was a source of comfort to my lord in the agony of his bereavement, has now fallen ill herself. I will go in. (*Entering and looking round.*) Ah! how careless the servants are. Padmāvatī is ill and they have left her alone with only a lamp to keep her company. So, she is asleep. I shall sit down. But if I sit elsewhere it might look as if I had but little love for her. So I shall sit on the same bed. (*Sits down.*) Why is it that now I am sitting beside her, my heart seems to thrill with joy? Happily her breathing is easy and regular. Her headache must have gone. And by leaving me one side of the bed she seems to invite me to clasp her in my arms. I will lie by her side, (*Proceeds to lie down.*)

King (*Talking in his sleep*). O Vāsavadattā.

Vāsavadattā (*Starting up.*) Ah! It is my lord and not Padmāvatī. Has he seen me? If so, the elaborate scheme of the noble Yaugandhārayaṇa will come to naught.

King. O daughter of Avantī's king.

Vāsavadattā. Happily my lord is only dreaming. There is no one about. I shall stay a little while and gladden my eyes and my heart.

King. Dear one, my darling pupil, answer me.

Vāsavadattā. I am speaking, my lord, I am speaking.

King. Are you displeased?

Vāsavadattā. Oh no! Oh no! Only very miserable.

King. If you are not displeased, why do you wear no jewels?

Vāsavadattā. What could be better than this?

King. Are you thinking of Viracikā?

Vāsavadattā (*Angrily*). O fie! Even here Viracikā!

King. Then I entreat forgiveness for Viracikā. (*He stretches out his hands.*)

Vāsavadattā. I have stayed too long. Some one might see me. I will go. But first I will put back on the bed that hand of his hanging down. (*She does so and exit.*)

King (*Rising suddenly.*) Stay! Vāsavadattā, stay! Alas!

Rushing out in my confusion, I struck against a panel of the door, and now I have no clear idea whether or no this was really my heart's desire. [7]

(*Enter the* **Jester.**)

Jester. Ah! Your Highness is awake,

King. Delightful news! Vāsavadattā is alive.

Jester. Oh, help us! What's this about Vāsavadattā? Why she died long ago.

King. Say not so, my friend,

As I lay sleeping on this couch she wakened me and disappeared. Rumaṇvān deceived me when he said she perished in the fire. [8]

Jester. Goodness gracious! but it's impossible, isn't it? I was talking about the swimming baths and you have been thinking of Her Ladyship, and you must have seen her in a dream.

King. So then it was only a dream.

If that was a dream, how glorious never to wake again; if this be illusion, long may that illusion last. [8]

Jester. There is a sylph dwelling in this city named Avantīsundari. That's what you must have seen, my dear fellow.

King. No, no,

At the end of my dream I awoke and saw her face; the eyes strangers to collyrium and the long unbraided locks were those of a lady guarding her virtue. [10]

Beside, see, comrade, see

This arm of mine was closely clasped by the agitated queen. Even now it has not ceased to thrill with joy though it felt her touch only in a dream. [11]

Jester. Come, now, no futile fancies. Come along, let us go to the ladies' court.

(*Enter the* **Chamberlain**.)

Chamberlain. Greeting to, my noble lord. King Darśaka, our sovereign lord, sends you these tidings: Rumaṇvān, the minister of Your Highness, has arrived in the vicinity with a large force to attack Āruṇi. Likewise my own victorious army, elephants, cavalry, chariots, and infantry, is equipped and ready. Arise, therefore. Moreover,

Your foes are divided. Your subjects, devoted to you by reason of your virtues, have gained confidence. Arrangements are completed to protect your rear when you advance. Whatever is needed to crush the foe has been provided. Forces have crossed the Ganges, the Vatsa kingdom is in the hollow of your hand. [12]

King (*Rising*). Very good. Now,

I shall see that Āruṇi, adept in dreadful deeds and in the battlefield, surging like a mighty ocean with huge elephants and horses, with a lashing spray of arrows on the wing,—I will destroy him. [13]

END OF THE FIFTH ACT

ACT VI

INTERLUDE

(*The Palace of Kauśāmbī.*)
(*Enter a* **Chamberlain.**)

Chamberlain. What ho, there! Who is on duty at the door of the golden arch?

(*Enter* **Portress.**)

Portress. Sir, it is I, Vijayā. What do you want me to do?

Chamberlain. Good woman, to take a message to Udayana, whose glory has increased by the capture of the Vatsa kingdom. Tell him that a chamberlain of the Raibhya clan has come here from the court of Mahāsena. Also Vāsavadattā's nurse, named Vasundharā, sent by Queen Aṅgāravatī. They are both waiting at the gate.

Portress. Sir, this is not the place or time for a porter's message.

Chamberlain. Not the place or time—how's that?

Portress. Listen, sir. Today some one in the sun-faced palace was playing on the lute. When my lord heard it he said, "I seem to hear the notes of my lute, Ghoshavatī."

Chamberlain. And then?

Portress. Then somebody went and asked where he got that lute. He said he had found it lying in a thicket of reeds on the banks of the Narmadā. If it was any use, they could take it to the king. So they brought it, and my lord pressed it to his side and went off in a swoon. When he came to himself, with tears running down his face, he said, "Thou art found, Ghoshavatī, but her we cannot see!" That, sir, is why the occasion is unsuitable. How can I take your message?

Chamberlain. My good woman, you must really let him know, for this as it were hangs on that.

Portress. I will let him know, sir: Why, here is my lord coming down from the sun-faced palace. I shall tell him here.

Chamberlain. Yes, do, good woman.

(*Exeunt.*)

END OF THE INTERLUDE

(*Enter the* **King** *and the* **Jester**.)

King.

Oh, my lute, whose notes are so sweet to the ear, after reposing in the lap of the queen and resting against her twin bosoms, how camest thou to dwell in that dreadful abode in the wilds, where flocks of birds have fouled thy strings? [1]

How heartless art thou, Ghoṣavatī, with no memory of thy unhappy mistress:

How she pressed thee to her side as she bore thee on her hip; how when weary she tucked thee softly between her breasts; how she bewailed the loss of me when we were parted; how she smiled and chatted in the intervals of playing. [2]

Jester. Enough now, don't torment yourself beyond measure.

King. Say not so, dear friend.

My passion, for a long time dormant, has been awakened by the lute, but the queen, who loved this lute, I cannot see. [3]

Vasantaka, have Ghoṣavatī refitted with new strings by some skilful artist and bring it back to me at once.

Jester. As your Highness commands.

(*Exit, taking the lute.*)

(*Enter* **Portress**.)

Portress. Greeting, my lord. There has arrived here from the court of Mahāsena a chamberlain of the Raibhya clan and also Vāsavadattā's nurse, Dame Vasundharā, sent by the Queen Aṅgāravatī. They are waiting at the entrance.

King. Then go and call Padmāvatī.

Portress. As my lord commands.

King. Can Mahāsena have learned this news so soon?

(*Enter* **Padmāvatī** *and the* **Portress**.)

Portress. This way, princess.

Padmāvatī. Greeting, my noble lord.

King. Padmāvatī, did they tell you? A chamberlain named Raibhya has come from Mahāsena with Dame Vasundharā, Vāsavadattā's nurse, from Queen Aṅgāravatī, and they are waiting outside.

Padmāvatī. My noble lord, I shall be glad to have good news of my relative's family.

King. It is worthy of you to speak of Vāsavadattā's relatives as your own. Padmāvatī, be seated. Now why do you not sit down?

Padmāvatī. My noble lord, would you have me seated at your side when you receive these people?

King. What harm is there in that?

Padmāvatī. That your lordship has married again may seem like indifference.

King. To hide my wife from the view of people who would see her would create a great scandal. So please be seated.

Padmāvatī. As my noble lord commands. (*Sits down.*) My lord, I am rather uneasy as to what the dear parents will say.

King. Quite so, Padmāvatī.

> My heart is full of misgivings as to what he will say. I stole away his daughter, and I have not kept her safe. Through fickle fortune I have greatly injured my fair name and I am afraid, like a son who has roused his father's wrath. [4]

Padmāvatī. Nothing can be preserved when its time has come.

Portress. The chamberlain and the nurse are waiting at the door.

King. Bring them in at once.

Portress. As my lord commands.

(*Exit.*)

(*Enter the* **Chamberlain**, *the* **Nurse**, *and the* **Portress**.)

Chamberlain.

> To visit this kingdom, allied to ours by marriage ties, is a great joy, but when I remember the death of our princess I am filled with sorrow. O Destiny, was it not enough for thee that the kingdom should be seized by foes if the welfare of the queen remained? [5]

Portress. Here is my lord. Approach him, sir.

Chamberlain (*Approaching the* **King**). Greeting to Your Highness.

Nurse. Greeting, Your Highness.

King (*Respectfully*). Sir,

That king who regulates the rise and fall of royal dynasties on this earth, that king with whom I craved alliance, tell me, is he well? [6]

Chamberlain. Why, yes. Mahāsena is very well, and he would be informed of the health of everybody here.

King (*Rising from his seat*). What are the commands of Mahāsena?

Chamberlain. This is worthy of Vaidehi's son. Now pray be seated and listen to Mahāsena's message.

King. As Mahāsena commands. (*Sits down.*)

Chamberlain. "Congratulations on the recovery of your kingdom seized by enemies, for,

There is no energy in those that are weak and faint-hearted—while the glory of kingship is enjoyed as a rule only by those that have energy. [7]

King. Sir, it is all due to the might of Mahāsena. For,

Aforetime when he had vanquished me he cherished me with his own sons. His daughter I stole away by force, but have not kept her safe. Now, learning of her decease, he shows me the same affection, for the king is the cause of my regaining the land of the Vatsas, my lawful subjects. [8]

Chamberlain. That is the message of Mahāsena. The queen's message will be delivered by this lady.

King. Ah! tell me, nurse.

The holy goddess of the city, chief among the sixteen queens, my mother—so afflicted with grief at my departure—is she in good health? [8]

Nurse. The queen is well, and sends inquiries for the health of your lordship and all that are yours.

King. The health of all that are mine? Ah, nurse, what sort of health is that?

Nurse. Nay, now, my lord, do not torment yourself beyond measure.

Chamberlain. Compose yourself, my noble lord.

Though Mahāsena's daughter has passed away, she has not ceased to exist, while she is so mourned by her noble lord. But verily whom can anyone protect in the hour of death? When the rope breaks, who can hold the pitcher? It is the same law for men and trees: now they grow and anon they are cut down. [10]

King. Nay, sir, say not so.

Mahāsena's daughter was my pupil and my beloved queen. How could I forget her, even in births to come? [11]

Nurse. Thus saith the queen: "Vāsavadattā has passed away. To me and to Mahāsena you are as dear as our Gopāla and Pālaka, for from the very first we intended you to be our son-in-law. That is why you were brought to Ujjain. Under the pretext of learning the lute we gave her to you, with no ritual fire as witness. In your impetuosity you carried her off without the celebration of the auspicious nuptial rites. So then we had portraits painted of you and of Vāsavadattā on a panel, and therewith celebrated the marriage. We send you the portraits, and hope the sight of them will give you satisfaction."

King. Ah, how loving and how noble is the message of her Majesty!

Those words I hold more precious than the conquest of a hundred realms. For I am not forgotten in her love, in spite of all my transgressions. [12]

Padmāvatī. My lord, I would like to see the portrait of my eldest sister and salute her.

Nurse. Look, princess, look. (*Shows her the picture.*)

Padmāvatī (*Aside*). Why! It is very much like the Lady Avantikā. (*Aloud.*) My lord, is this a good likeness of her ladyship?

King. Likeness? No, I think it is herself. Oh, alas!

How could cruel calamity befall this charming loveliness? How could fire ravage the sweetness of this face? [13]

Padmāvatī. By looking at my lord's portrait I can tell whether her ladyship's is a good likeness or not.

Nurse. See here, princess.

Padmāvatī (*Looking*). My lord's portrait is so good, I am sure her ladyship's must be a good likeness too.

King. My queen, ever since you looked at the picture I see you are delighted but perplexed. Why is that?

Padmāvatī. My noble lord, there is a lady living here who is exactly like this portrait.

King. What, of Vāsavadattā?

Padmāvatī. Yes.

King. Then send for her at once.

Padmāvatī. My noble lord, a certain brahman left her with me as a ward, before my marriage, saying that she was his sister. Her husband is away, and she shuns the sight of other men. So when you see her in my company you will know who it is.

King.

If she be a brahman's sister, it is manifest she must be another.
Identity of form occurs in life as of very doubles. [14]

(*Enter* **Portress.**)

Portress. Greeting to my noble lord. Here is a brahman from Ujjain who says he placed his sister as a ward in the hands of the princess. He wants to take her back, and he is waiting at the door.

King. Padmāvatī, is this the brahman you spoke of?

Padmāvatī. It must be.

King. Let the brahman be introduced at once with the formalities proper to the inner court.

Portress. As my lord commands. (*Exit.*)

King. Padmāvatī, do you bring the lady.

Padmāvatī. As my noble lord commands. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* **Yaugandhārayaṇa** *and the* **Portress.**)

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Ah! (*Aside.*)

Though it was in the king's interest that I concealed the Queen
Consort, though I can see that what I've done is to his benefit,
yet even when my work is done my heart misgives me as to what
my royal master will say. [15]

Portress. Here is my lord. Approach him, sir.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Greeting to Your Highness, greeting!

King. I seem to have heard that voice before. Sir Brahman, did you leave your sister as a ward in the hands of Padmāvatī?

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Certainly I did.

King. Then let his sister come here at once without delay.

Portress. As my lord commands. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter* **Padmāvatī**, **Avantikā**, *and* **Portress.**)

Padmāvatī. Come, lady. I have pleasant news for you.

Avantikā. What is it?

Padmāvatī. Your brother has come.

Avantikā. Happily he still remembers me.

Padmāvatī (*Approaching*). Greeting, my noble lord. Here is my ward.

King. Make a formal restitution, Padmāvatī. A deposit should be returned in the presence of witnesses. The worthy Raibhya here and this good lady will act as recorders.

Padmāvatī. Now, sir, resume your charge of this lady.

Nurse (*Looking closely at* **Avantikā**). Oh, but this is the princess Vāsavadattā.

King. What, Mahāsena's daughter? Oh, my queen, go into the ladies' court with Padmāvatī.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. No, no, she must not go in there. This lady, I tell you, is my sister.

King. What are you saying? This is the daughter of Mahāsena.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. O king,

> Born in the Bharata clan, you are self-controlled, enlightened, and pure. To take her by force were unworthy of you, a model of kingly duty. [16]

King. Very well, but let us just see this similarity of form. Draw the curtain aside.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Greeting to my royal master.

Vāsavadattā. Greeting to my noble lord.

King. Heavens! This is Yaugandhārayaṇa, and this is Mahāsena's daughter.

> This time it is true, or do I see the vision again? I saw her before just like this, but was deceived. [17]

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Sire, by concealing the queen I am guilty of a grave offence. Please pardon me, my royal master. (*Falls at his feet.*)

King. (*Raising him*). You are certainly Yaugandhārayaṇa.

> By feigning madness, by battles and by plans worked out according to the codes of polity—you, by your exertions, raised me up when I was sinking. [18]

Yaugandhārayaṇa. I do but follow the fortunes of my royal master.

Padmāvatī. So then this is her Majesty the Queen. Lady, in treating you as a companion, I have unwillingly transgressed the bounds of propriety. I bow my head and beg your forgiveness.

Vāsavadattā. Rise, rise, happy lady of a living lord, rise, I say. If anything offends it is your suppliant form.

Padmāvatī. I thank you!

King. Tell me, my dear Yaugandhārayaṇa, what was your object in concealing the queen?

Yaugandhārayaṇa. My one idea was to save Kauśāmbī.

King. What was your reason for putting her in the hands of Padmāvatī as a ward?

Yaugandhārayaṇa. The soothsayers, Pushpaka and Bhadraka, had predicted that she was predestined to become your queen.

King. Did Rumaṇvān know of this?

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Sire, they all knew.

King. Oho! what a rogue he is—Rumaṇvān!

Yaugandhārayaṇa. Sire, let the worthy Raibhya and this good lady return this very day to announce the news of the safety of the queen.

King. No, no. We will all go together, taking Queen Padmāvatī.

Yaugandhārayaṇa. As Your Majesty commands.

EPILOGUE

> This earth, that extends to the ocean, with the Himalaya and Vindhya mountains as ear-drops—may our Lion King rule over her, marked with the symbol of a single sovereign away. [19]